

December 6, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
United States Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

I write out of concern that the Department of Homeland Security is failing to timely process international adoption cases, including those from Missouri. On September 23, my staff wrote to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on behalf of two of my Missouri constituents, Adam and Jill Trower, but received only a pro forma response. Your agency has repeatedly brushed off the Trowers by providing an indefinite timeline for their adoption case, leaving them to wait for months on end to learn when they might be united with their adopted child. This creates a glaring double standard as non-citizens have recently received expedited consideration by your agency.

During her Senate confirmation process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Ur Jaddou told me, in response to a question about my constituents' case, that "[w]hen it comes to reuniting families in the U.S., especially when it involves children, adjudication of immigration-related applications should be as efficient as possible under the law."

But the system for international adoptions is apparently far from efficient. My constituents have waited over two years—and counting—on USCIS to even render a decision on paperwork which would allow their adopted child to come home. At least twice this year, USCIS has declined to provide this family with a timeframe for a decision. Hardly efficient.

In contrast, your agency rushed over 100,000 Afghans through immigration processes, often foregoing full vetting altogether, following President Joe Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. Today, the Department of Homeland Security even waives filing fees and expedites applications for these Afghans.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, American families following the law are told to stand by indefinitely.

It should not be more difficult for adopting parents in the United States to even know whether or not they will be united with their children than it is for thousands of unvetted

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/11/08/dhs-announces-fee-exemptions-streamlined-processing-afghan-nationals-they-resettle>

refugees to enter our country. Please provide the specific actions your agency will take to expeditiously respond to the cases of American families seeking adoptions abroad.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley  
United States Senator